GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1289
ANSWERED ON:09.02.2017
Powers to Gram Panchayats
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Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

a) the powers conferred to the Gram Panchayats under 73rd Constitution Amendment Act;
b) whether the Union Government proposes to delegate all the powers to the Gram Panchayats under the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act;
c) if so, the details thereof and time by which it is likely to be conferred; and
d) if not, the reasons therefor alongwith the steps proposed to be taken thereon?

Answer

(a) & (b): 'Panchayats' being 'Local Bodies' is a State subject mandated under Part IX, and List II (State List) of Seventh Schedule (Article 246) of the Constitution of India. Article 243G of Part IX of the Constitution allows discretion to State Legislatures to endow, to the three-tier Panchayats including Gram Panchayats, with powers and authority to enable them to function as institutions of local self-governance including in areas illustratively listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution (Annexe-I). There is wide variation in the extent of devolution of powers to Gram Panchayats to plan, implement and monitor schemes for economic development and social justice. The status of devolution of powers to Gram Panchayats (GPs) is given at Annexe II.

(c) & (d): The implementation of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution introduced by the 73rd Constitution Amendment, including devolution of powers to Gram Panchayats by States, is reviewed by the Government from time to time through studies and discussions with the States. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has continuously persuaded the State Governments to devolve powers to Panchayats and also provides assistance to the States/UTs for capacity building of Panchayats to enable them to perform devolved functions effectively and efficiently. The annual Devolution Index Report and the State of Panchayati Raj Reports commissioned by the MoPR assess the policy and legislative framework and outcomes of the powers devolved and utilised by the Panchayats in the States. States and Union Territories ranking higher on Devolution Index are awarded on 24th April, National Panchayat Day. The MoPR has also finalised and shared with States the guidelines for Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), which envisages that the States where the Constitutional provisions of Panchayats apply should set up empowered committees at States, District and Block level for monitoring and facilitation of convergent planning by the Gram Panchayats under their respective GPDP guidelines. All Part-IX States have finalized their respective GPDP guidelines thereby putting in place the above arrangements